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Selected aspects of verse translation: William Shakespeare's Hamlet and its Polish translations by Stanisław Barańczak and Maciej Słomczyński

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SELECTED ASPECTS OF VERSE TRANSLATION: WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S *HAMLET* AND ITS POLISH TRANSLATIONS BY STANISŁAW BARAŃCZAK AND MACIEJ SŁOMCZYŃSKI

1 Preliminary remarks

It is a commonly accepted view that while analysing any kind of literary work, apart from its lexical and syntactic meaning, its form proves to be highly significant. Much meaning of the text can be derived from the spatial structure of it and thus, its complicated formal organisation becomes a relevant element for analysis and proper understanding. Although a common reader approaches drama in a book form or its scenic realisation, the correspondence between the form and the content is of crucial importance. "Every element of style," maintains Clemens (1951: 89), "in fact every single line […] becomes dramatically relevant" and consequently, is relevant to translation. Thus, proper analysis of the translated work should comprise, as required by translation procedures, a synthesis of literary and linguistic approaches to works of literature. In the present paper, I will try to compare the formal realisation of two Polish translations of *Hamlet* by Stanisław Barańczak and Maciej Słomczynski with the original as far as their formal organisation is concerned.

2 Theoretical approaches to formal translation

A general observation that stems from theoretical and practical approaches to the problem of the form of the text in translation can be highlighted by the two following factors:

- the form of the translated work can be the consequence of the previous lexical, grammatical and syntactic choices; or
- the translator intentionally subordinates all his translation choices to the given form.

The distinction between the form imposed on the translator by the text itself (a) and his intentional and motivated choice of the form of the text (b) led Holmes (1973: 91–105) to enumeration of four forms employed by translators in verse translation:

1. **Mimetic form**. Translators may retain the original form of the source text (ST) in a translation. Since no verse form in any language is identical, the translator's task is to reproduce or imitate the original form in the target language (TL).
2. **Analogical form**. The stress falls here on the "parallel function within the poetic tradition" (95) that the forms perform. Translators seek here the most appropriate functional and historically sanctioned form and use it in the translation on the basis of functional equivalence.
3. **Organic form.** Using this approach, the translator analyses the semantic material of the original and lets the translation "take its own unique poetic shape as the translation develops" (54).
4. **Extraneous ('deviant') form.** Here the translator composes a *metapoem* in the sense that neither the form nor the content of the ST is taken into consideration and hence, the translation in no way implicates its SL version.

The importance of proper translating of the text's formal organisation is especially visible in drama translation, since the dramatic text is, by its definition, a piece of work to be presented on the theatre stage. Theatre convention, to continue with the problem, works on the *langue parlée* and an improper translation of the form of a dramatic text may result, on the one hand, in depletion of its meanings and, on the other hand, in communicative noise.

3 Metrical aspects of *Hamlet*

Azhnyuk (1974: 7) indicates that out of *Hamlet'*s 3949 lines, 2596 are written in blank verse which consists of unrhymed lines of iambic pentameter. The foot consists of two syllables, the first being unaccented (–) and the second accented (∪). Metre of this kind is widely used in English poetry and drama since, except for unrhymed free verse, it most closely resembles the normal patterns of English speech. Moreover, the stresses of this metrical pattern imitate the natural flow of clauses and phrases "while endings fall at intervals that are easily followed without counting" (Boyce 1990: 65). As a result, the choice of blank verse by Shakespeare as the dominating metre and its 'speech-like' pattern confirm the idea that *Hamlet* was written as a theatre drama and it should be interpreted as a text to be recited on the stage.

   Blank verse is not, however, the only metrical pattern used in *Hamlet*. The varieties of styles range from conventional stiff, truly poetic forms, to free verses and end-stopped blank verse. Styles change, depending on the situation, the interlocutor, or the message to be communicated. The parts of the Players (2.2), for example, are slightly archaic and old-fashioned as compared to Hamlet's soliloquy in 2.2. which is, as Clemen (1964: 22) notices, "a turmoil of emotion, recollection of violent accusation". Yet another type of verse is seen in the

King's speech "O! My offence is rank…". Granville-Barker (1957: 207) points out that "it is hammered out" and adds that it is one that "gives us the temper of the man, acute, capable, tenacious, but insensible" (202).

4 Paradigm of a poem

The paradigm of the poem comprises pause, syllable, accent, caesura and rhyme (see Kulawik 1997: 168). Determination of its constituents is, on the one hand, the first step towards manifesting the proper formal structure of the analysed text. On the other hand, from the theatre perspective, it enables the actors to reveal the distribution of the accentual patterns and pauses in the way intended by the original author.

4.1 Pause, syllable, accent, caesura

The beginning of the first soliloquy is as follows (see Azhnyuk 10):

<div align="center">

– ∪ – ∪ ∪ ∪ – ∪ – ∪
O! That this too too solid flesh would melt,

– ∪ – ∪ –∪ – –– ∪
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew

– – – ∪ – ∪ – – – ∪
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd

– ∪ – ∪ – ∪ – II – ∪ ∪
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! God!

– ∪ – ∪ ∪ – – ∪ –∪
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable

– ∪ – ∪ – ∪ – – – ∪
Seem to me all the uses of this world.

– ∪ – ∪ II – – – ∪ – ∪ –
Fie on 't! Ah fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,

– ∪ – ∪ II – ∪ – ∪ – ∪ –
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature

– ∪ – ∪ –
Possess it merely. (1.2.129–137)

</div>

Thirty-two feet out of 42 in the passage are iambs. Their numbers as well as regular pattern clearly indicate that Hamlet speaks iambic pentameter. The tone of his soliloquy is not one of pathos. It reflects Hamlet's disgust at the world which is for him "an unweeded garden". He cannot find his place there and would die if God did not forbid it. The smoothness of iambs is distorted in some places, which can be, on the one hand, a consequence of the chosen lexis and employed grammatical constructions, and, on the other hand, semantically sanctioned:

line 1 – ∪ ∪ ∪ –   the adverb *too* is used to emphasize the adjective

	solid; thus a semantic-grammatical requirement
line 2 $\cup - - - \cup$	grammar: resolve + into + a (the preposition and indefinite article are here unaccented)
line 3 $- - -$	grammar: the conjunction 'or' introducing some alternative is unaccented
line 4 $- \cup -$	semantic: distortion in the form of an amphibrach; the caesura is strongly marked.

The caesura (sign "II"), being here semantically relevant, marks the point where a pause is placed which is caused by the natural rhythm of the language. In line 4 the caesura is additionally strengthened by the exclamation mark and appears after syllable 7, while in lines 7 and 8 (strengthened by the exclamation mark again and a semicolon) it forms the pattern of an 11 foot line (4 + 7). Irregularity here takes the form of a final amphibrach, which may be interpreted as an iamb with one 'extra' unaccented syllable (hyperkalatexis).

Both translators concerned rightly concluded that the equivalent of English blank verse is Polish 11-syllable line and, consequently, the translations follow that pattern (analogical form). In Polish literature the form (11-syllable (5 + 6)) is widespread due to the immense popularity of works by Ignacy. Krasicki (*Myszeis*, *Monachomachia*), Jan Kochanowski (*Odprawa posłów greckich*), or Juliusz Słowacki (*Beniowski*, *Król Duch*). The capacity of the line makes it possible for the translators to create a line that mirrors, at least to a certain degree the patterns of normal speech. Because of the application of the form, Polish translations are as follows:

Słomczyński:

$- \quad \cup - \quad \cup - - \text{ II } - \quad \cup - \qquad \cup -$
O, gdyby ciało to, zbyt trwałe, mogło

$\cup \quad - \quad - \cup - \text{ II } - \cup \quad - \quad - \qquad \cup -$
Stopnieć, roztajać i zmienić się w rosę,

$- \qquad \cup - \quad \cup - \text{ II } - \cup - \quad - \qquad \cup -$
Lub gdyby swego zakazu nie zwrócił

$\cup \qquad - - \cup - \text{ II } \cup - \quad (\cup) - \cup -$
Sam Wiekuisty przeciw samobójstwu!

$- \quad \cup - \quad \cup - \text{ II } \cup - (\cup) - \quad \cup -$
O Boże! Boże! Jakże mi się zdają

$- \cup - \qquad \cup \ - \text{ II } - \cup - - \ \cup -$
Nużące, stęchłe, jałowe i błahe

$\cup \quad - \ - \ \cup - \text{ II } (\cup) - \cup - \quad \cup -$
Wszystkie uczynki tego świata! Hańba!

$\cup \quad - - \qquad \cup - \text{ II } (\cup) - \cup - \qquad \cup -$
Hańba mu! Jest to ogród pełen chwastów,

$\cup \quad - - \cup - \text{ II } - \quad \cup - \ - \cup -$
Rozsiewających dojrzałe nasienie,

$- \quad \cup - \cup \quad - \text{ II } - \cup \quad - \quad - \ \cup -$
A władzę nad nim wyłączną sprawuje

∪　－　－　∪－II－　∪　－　　　－∪－
Wszystko, co gnije   i cuchnie w naturze.

Barańczak:

∪－　－　∪－II　－　－　∪　－　∪－
Gdyby ten balast przyziemnego ciała

∪　－－　∪－II ∪　－　　－　－∪－
Mógł się rozpłynąć, rozwiać w lotną rosę;

∪－　－　　∪－II－　－(∪)－　∪－
Gdyby nam Stwórca nie odebrał prawa

∪　－－　∪　－II ∪－　　(∪)－　∪－
Do samobójczej śmierci! Boże święty,

－　∪　－　∪　－II ∪　－　－－∪－
Jak nudna, stęchła, płaska i jałowa

－　∪－　∪　－II　－　∪－－　∪
Jest każda z ziemskich spraw, cały ten świat!

∪　　(∪)－∪－II－　－　∪－∪　－
Świat? Śmiechu warte: nieplewiony ogród,

∪　－　－∪－II ∪　－　－－∪　－
Gdzie się panoszy zielsko ordynarnej

∪　－　－∪－II
Ludzkiej podłości.

As we have seen above, the distribution of the accented syllables in both translations is far from the iambs that constitute the English original. Such compilation of various metrical feet (amphibrachs, trochees, dactils, anapests, iambs and peons) can be explained by the fact that about 75% of the Polish words consist of two and three syllables (Kulawik 1997: 208). The English language is characterised by a relatively large number of one and two syllable words and consequently, composing a line in Polish that consists of iambs is hardly attainable. From the translation's point of view, the choice of the 11-syllable line is significant. This line is the functional equivalent of English blank verse since, similarly to the position occupied by blank verse, the greatest Polish Renaissance and Romantic dramas use this scheme. It is also a semantic correspondent of the ST in the sense that the effective distribution of rhythmic feet allows composition of a line that may be successfully uttered on the stage and easily comprehended by the viewers.

4.2 Rhymes

In the quoted passage rhymes are not present, as blank verse is by its definition unrhymed, there are, however a few exceptions. Not surprisingly, rhymes used by Shakespeare are relevant to translation as they "perform dramatic and artistic function" (Azhnyuk 1974: 15). Following Jakobson's idea that rhymes necessarily form a semantic relationship between rhyming units (quoted in Aznhyuk), we

distinguish the following types of rhymes: speech-end rhyme, speech-pause rhyme, speech-link rhyme, scene- and act-end rhyme and external rhyme.

Speech-end rhyme is found at the end of blank verse speech. Shakespeare frequently uses it in speech that occurs at the end of act or scene or before an exit or an entrance of a dramatic person, in which case it is correspondingly called act-end, scene-end or exit rhyme. Its presence may be conditioned by dramatic techniques – a contrast of two opposing characters or ideas, a conclusion, which marks a final resolution of the play, or a climax, where it adds greatly to the tension and emphasises the tenor of the play.

> I must be cruel only to be kind:
> Thus bad begins and worse remains bekind,

says Hamlet in 3.4.178–179. The oxytonic rhyme used above has here a linking function: it joins both lines so that the couplet is treated as one thought. Moreover, the rhyme is the only one to appear in the whole 24 lines of the speech. Thus, the rhyme stresses the lines which are in fact the conclusion of the whole passage.

Barańczak in his translation of the fragment unfortunately neglects the rhyme and introduces full stop instead of the colon present in the original. As a result, both lines concerned can be treated as two separate and independent verses and their sense is lost:

> Jestem okrutny, bo chcę twego dobra.
> Jest źle, a będzie chyba znacznie gorzej.

Similarly, Barańczak disregards rhymes in 1.2.85–86:

> But I have that within which passeth show;
> These but the trappings and the suits of woe,

which he translates as follows:

> To tylko stroje i przebrania bólu.
> Lecz w sobie, w środku mam więcej niż pozór.

Here again, full stop divides the couplet into loose verses without striking significance.

Yet, in some other places (2.2.22–23, 3.3.118–119) Barańczak is more careful as far as the rhymes are concerned: *show – woe*, and *move – love*, are representatives of oxytonic rhymes, prevalent in English, and they are translated into Polish as paroxytonic ones, that, due to the position of the accent, are the most frequently used: *oskarżenia – zmienia, niestety – sekrety*.

In contrast to Barańczak, Słomczyński in his translation precisely mirrors the rhymes used by Shakespeare. For the lines quoted, he finds rhymes that, similarly to Barańczak's, are functional equivalents of English oxytonic ones:

> Muszę być okrutnym
> Po to jedynie, aby móc być dobrym.
> Oto zło przyszło, a gorsze mknie za nim. (3.4)

> Lecz mam coś w głębi nie do przedstawienia,
> Reszta to szata i pozór cierpienia. (1.2)

All of the rhymes are not grammatical (different grammatical categories are rhymed), Słomczyński does not use tautology in the way that he pairs different words in one couplet and, what is here of crucial importance, the rhymes convey additional meaning in the same way as meaning is conveyed by the original.

Speech-pause rhymes, as Aznhyuk points out, are used extremely rarely and they are placed "within the body of a blank verse speech [in order to break – T.G.] the effect of the free flow of the verse and concentrate the attention on some part of the monologic utterance" (Aznhyuk 1974: 17–18). The verse "To be, or not to be…" is an example of this rhyme. The caesura, being placed after syllable 6 marks the end of this rhyme, and the rhyme itself has the form of alliteration (repetition of *o* 4 times and *e* twice) and consonance (*t* is repeated three times and *b* twice). Interestingly enough, Barańczak, as well as Słomczyński translated the fragment in the same way: *być albo nie być* which seems to be the proper choice as, apart from the meaning of the original, it contains the rhyme in question: *b* appears three times, *y* and *ć* twice.

Scene- and act-end rhymes are still couplets and they are similar to speech-end rhyme, however, the former appear exclusively at the end of a scene or act. The rhyme is found in the fragment already quoted (2.1.118–119). Another example, successfully rendered by both translators is:

> I'll have grounds
> More relative than this: the play's the thing
> Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king (2.2.599–601)

Słomczyński:
Chcąc niepewności przekroczyć granicę,
Sumienie króla w teatrze pochwycę.

Barańczak:
Choć słowa złożą się w akt oskarżenia,
Niech serce w wyrok śmierci go nie zmienia.

The parts of a dialogue, that is, separate phrases of a poetic verse, can be joined together by **speech-link rhyme.** Preserving that rhyme in translation cannot be ignored since, apart from its linking function, it "gives to a dialogue a quick and energetic pace" (Aznhyuk 1974: 17–18). Unfortunately, in neither translation are the rhymes preserved and thus, the dialogues lack the dynamics that emanate from the original:

Hamlet.
There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark
But he's an arrant knave.
Horatio.
There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave,
To tell us this. (1.5.123–126)

Barańczak:
Hamlet.
                              Nie ma w całej Danii
Większego łotra niż – skończony łajdak.
Horacjo.
Żeby nam zdradzić taką rewelację,
Nie musiał zaraz duch wyłazić z grobu.

Słomczyński:
Hamlet.
Że w całej Danii nie mieszka łotr żaden,
Który by nie był skończonym nicponiem.
Horacjo. Nie trzeba ducha, który powstał z grobu,
By o tym wiedzieć, panie mój.

The following fragment illustrates a similar problem:

Polonius.
Give o'er the play.
King.
Give me some light: away! (3.2.265–266)

Barańczak:
Poloniusz.
Przerwać przedstawienie!
Król.
Światła! Chodżmy stąd.

Słomczyński:
Polonius.
Przerwijcie sztukę!
Król.
Światła mi dajcie: – odejdzmy!

Azhnyuk points out yet another type of rhyme, namely *external rhyme*. He emphasizes that they are excluded from the dramatic dialogue and thus, are said not to mirror the integral Shakespearean style. Examples of this rhyme are found in the speeches constituting "Murder of Gonzago". The "play within the play" it-

self, being written in iambic pentameter as well, marks deep and sharp contrast with Shakespeare's mature style. Considering the formal organisation of the passages, one immediately notices the rhyming units:

> *Queen.*
> O! Confound the rest;
> Such love must needs be treason in my breast:
> In second husband let me be accurst;
> None wed the second but who kill'd the first. (3.2.174–177)

Rhymes used here are of different kinds: oxytonic ones, as a rule, prevail, however, there are also mixed, i.e. oxytonic and paroxytonic (*joy – destroy* (162–3), *distrust – must* (162–3), purely paroxytonic (*quantity – extremity* (164–5)), and pairs of words with slight traces of alliteration and consonance (*fear – there* (168–9), *speak – break* (183–4). All these types of rhymes, as well as other tropes, for example, rare enjambment and an almost complete lack of caesuras, result in the parts being stiff, monotonous, and sententious (Azhnyuk 1974: 19).

4.3 Poetic line

To continue with the problem, such differentiation of style should be echoed in the translation. Słomczyński achieves the described effect by employing 13-syllable lines in the translation of these passages. Such verse has a long history in Polish literary tradition. Since the 15th century, many poets, for example Jan Kochanowski (*Treny*), Wacław Potocki (*Wojna Chocimska*), and Adam Mickiewicz (*Pan Tadeusz*), have successfully used the 13-syllable line. "It is one of the most universal ways of poetry making" (Okopień-Sławińska 1985, see in Krzyżanowski 1985: 588) and it is successfully applied in translation into Polish of such forms as the antic hexameter of French alexandrine (Miodońska-Brookes et al., 1978: 478). Hence, the 13-syllable line makes it possible to create long, complex, subordinate clauses and thus, it is flexible to some lexical and syntactic changes within it. Considering the above, Słomczyński's verse choice seems justifiable.

The form of "Murder of Gonzago" formally and stylistically contradicts a 10-syllable line, which results in the change of tenor: long, elaborate verses and rare enjambments sound stiff and archaic. Thus, Słomczyński again uses a form that is a semantic equivalent of the one used in the original: he makes use of a form already existing in the target language (mimetic approach).

The rhymes used by Słomczyński also show some traces of archaisation. There appear pairs of words belonging to the same grammatical category, for example adjectives (*słone-wywyższone*), verbs in the same form (*darzę – okażę, błyszczy – zniszczy*) or words based only on alliteration (*sługą – długo, ziemia – wytchnienia*). The rhymes are of no exotic character and interestingly enough, all of them are paroxytonic. Though such techniques are not praised by contempo-

rary literary criticism, here they play an extremely important role, i.e. they are markers of archaic style:

> *Królowa aktorka.*
>   O, cóż na mnie spada!
> Miłość nowa w mej piersi, byłaby to zdrada.
> Obym drugiego wziąwszy pod przekleństwem żyła,
> Ta ma drugiego, która pierwszego zabiła.

Barańczak, on the contrary, in his translation of "Murder of Gonzago" uses the same metrical pattern – the 11-syllable line. Such unification of Shakespeare's metres is improper from the translator's point of view since in this context, the 11-syllable line does not render the rhythmic difference projected by Shakespeare. The archaisation, realised here on the lexical and syntactic levels, is less strong as compared to Słomczyński and the frequent enjambments are not a sufficient means for expressing this formal discrepancy. What made Barańczak use the same verse was the fact that in the Romantic period the stanzaic 11-syllable line became extremely popular and almost completely replaced by 13-syllable line (Okopień-Sławińska 1985 in Krzyżanowski 1985). Consequently, Barańczak used that 'new' form in translation of the passages and he marks its different metre by other means of expression. Rhymes, which in Słomczyński's translation constitute an integral and significant part of the style, here rarely display traces of the former style. Barańczak rhymes different grammatical categories: nouns with adjectives (*wiodła – podła*), nouns with verbs (*chwilę – schylę*); his rhymes seem to be selectively chosen, and the only ones to represent the old rhyming scheme are: *czyni – morderczyni*, (*na*) *dnie – składnie*. Alliteration, as a kind of rhyme and the simplest rhyming technique, appears only once (*sługę – długo*), which further shadows the archaisation:

> *Królowa aktorka.*
>   Nie kończ! Ani słowa!
> Byłaby zdradą taka miłość nowa.
> Wyjść za drugiego? Taki wybór czyni
> Tylko pierwszego męża morderczyni.

5 Prose and verse passages

Apart from the many verse passages, there are parts of *Hamlet* written in prose. Such diversity of form is, on the one hand, the consequence of the requirements of the Elizabethan theatre and, on the other hand, it mirrors the different characters presented by Shakespeare. In her critical study of *Hamlet*, Bolt (1990: 35) points out that "on the Elizabethan stage a noble character uses prose when talking to other noble characters only when they are entertaining one another with witty conversation". Thus, it is not surprising that Hamlet switches into prose

when he converses with Horatio (act 5, sc. 1), King and Polonius (act 3, sc. 2) and Ophelia (act 3, sc. 2). Prose, to continue with the problem, is by no means typical of lower class character or the minor characters of low life. The King and Queen speak prose as readily as Rosencranz and Guildstern or the Gravediggers. However, one immediately notices here the remnants of the "antic disposition" according to which the use of the verse form was an act of certain intimacy or respect. This is the reason for which Hamlet questions the Gravediggers in prose and the answers he gets are also in prose. The same rule applies to scenes with the Clowns. Hamlet gives them theatrical instructions in prose and so the players speak with him (act 3, sc.2). Switches from verse into prose are in *Hamlet* the sign of yet another drama technique used by Shakespeare which is frequently referred to as 'monitoring emotions'. When Hamlet goes mad, or at least pretends to, he speaks prose. On other occasions, he soliloquises using blank verse. Thus, prose speeches have an additional 'emotional' dimension or, if we treat his madness as 'fooling in order to trap the murderer', they display some traces of a mysteriously plotted plan. Therefore, Sydney Bolt rightly concludes that Hamlet "is […] the only character whose style of speech reveals the actual working of his mind. The language of the others reveals only the overt intentions, but we can watch Hamlet thinking as he speaks" (Bolt 1990: 36). As far as the form is concerned, for the scope of the paper, it is interesting to analyse the translation of act 3 scenes 1 and 2 as being composed of various poetic passages.

Scene 1 starts with a conversation between the King, the Queen, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. All of them speak in verse which illustrates their reciprocal respect. The translations are in verse as well; the 11-syllable line is, as indicated above, the functional equivalent of English iambic pentameter. Line 56 opens Hamlet's soliloquy in verse and Ophelia converses with him in verse, but they immediately shift into prose when Hamlet asks her: "Are you honest?" (103). The sudden change of form implies Hamlet's mental illness and prose used in the Polish translations has the same indicative function. Next, when Hamlet has stepped off the stage, Ophelia uses verse with the King and her father until the end of the scene. Here again, verse speech is a means of showing respect to the speakers and so is symbolised by the Polish 11-syllable line. In scene 2 Hamlet instructs the Players in prose because of his condescension of their lower status. Then, as Horatio enters the stage, he converses with him in verse since they are friends and they continue the verse until the King with his men appears. Hamlet immediately turns to prose, as in the eyes of the King he is mad. After the verse passages of "Murder of Gonzago", Hamlet uses verse only twice when he discovers the King's guilt. The passages are rhymed and metrically irregular:

Act 3 Scene 2 Lines 268–271

	Shakespeare	Barańczak	Słomczyński
	8 syllables	9 syllables	8 syllables
	5 ~	7 ~	7 ~
	8 ~	9 ~	8 ~
	6 ~	7 ~	7 ~

Act 3 Scene 2 Lines 276–281

4 ~	3 ~	4 ~
8 ~	9 ~	8 ~
6 ~	7 ~	8 ~
8 ~	9 ~	8 ~
7 ~	7 ~	8 ~

Shakespeare uses lines of different length and through mixing verse with prose passages depicts the perplexity of Hamlet's soul: they show his will and determination to take revenge as well as his satisfaction with revealing the murderer. As far as the forms of the translations are concerned, Barańczak's lines are more diversified and thus, they are brought closer to the original. Słomczyński, on the contrary, uses a more stable form, which correlates with the 11-syllable line employed in the prose passages.

6 Conclusions

The above analysis shows that formal aspects of a poetic text are important constituents of its meaning and significant conveyors of aesthetic value. The approaches to translation of such pieces presented here, however frequently diversified and neglected by theoreticians and practitioners, prove their efficiency and lead to the proper translation solutions and decisions. As it was shown, in both translations concerned, the formal organisation of Shakespeare's drama was rendered with greater or lesser faithfulness in Polish, which implies that the translators were aware of their substantial status in the text.

It can be concluded that the proper translation of verse focuses on the notion of *pragmatic equivalence*. The term should be understood as the homogeneity, equivalency or the highest possible overlap of the TL text and its SL original on the basis of their literaly, cultural and historical embedding, i.e. the specific communicative situation (Munday 2001: 49). Moreover, *pragmatic equivalence* is based here on functional correspondence between the original and the translation. As highlighted above, the translators did not attempt a minute reproduction of the formal peculiarities of *Hamlet*. Their rendering in Polish was done in such a way that a prospective Pole, either reader or theatre viewer, got an impression of witnessing the original version of the drama conceived by its original author. The mimetic approach to verse translation, which also stems from the foundations of *pragmatic equivalence* and which is here used extensively, made it possible to attain a translation capable of evoking in its receivers the same or at least similar associations and reactions to those of the original. In this aspect, the equivalence in question overlaps with Vermeer's theory of *skopos of the text* (1983) and the concept of *dynamic equivalence* postulated by Nida and Taber (1969).

It should be noted that the mimetic approach, though effective and proper in the translations concerned, is not the exclusive technique for translation of verse form. Its utilisation here can be justified by the fact that the ST is dramatic dia-

logue whose spoken form is presented in the theatre. Translators, however, may use other translation approaches depending on the convention of the performance and the requirements of the stage. Nevertheless, *pragmatic equivalence* seems to be a universal *modus operandi* that can prove its efficiency in other translation techniques listed above and in various types of texts. Here its effectiveness is justified on the practical and theoretical level.

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